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"Woman Dies While Riding Roller Coaster"

AP, 6/1/2003



Dear Colleague:

When I wrote to you recently regarding amusement park ride safety, I noted that fifty-five fatalities have been associated with amusement park rides in the last fifteen years. Unfortunately, there are now fifty-six. This past weekend a 32-year-old New York woman fell to her death from The Raven roller coaster (pictured here) at Holiday World & Splashin' Safari in Santa Claus. Such rides used to be regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission,

but the industry carved out a special interest loophole in 1981, so today, these rides are often unregulated. That appears to be the case in Indiana:

“State officials acknowledged that their inspectors certify only the mechanical aspects of a ride, not its operations: ‘We don’t do that, and as far as I know, we don’t have the authority to do that,’ said Alden Taylor, a spokesman for Commissioner, which oversees ride inspections.”

-Indianapolis Star, June 4, 2003

While the rides escape the basic safety regulations applied to other products, they are rapidly changing. In 1990, the top speed of roller coasters was just 70 mph. Today the top speed is 120 mph- a 71 percent increase in just 12 years. Moreover, injuries rose 96 percent over the last five years.

WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO REDUCE INJURIES ON THEME PARK RIDES. Please join me in supporting H.R. 2207, the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act, to close the Roller Coaster loophole. Call David Moulton at 225-2836 to join us in this effort create a safer, more enjoyable amusement park experience.

Sincerely,
/s/

Edward J. Markey